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Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
in support of raised H.B. 6321 *An Act Concerning the Adoption and Implementation*
of the Connecticut Parentage Act
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Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Gretchen Raffa, Senior Director of Public Policy, Advocacy & Organizing at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England testifying in support of raised H.B. 6321 *An Act Concerning the Adoption and Implementation of the Connecticut Parentage Act*. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is the largest provider of sexual and reproductive health care in Connecticut, serving nearly 62,000 patients last year at 14 health centers. As a health care provider and advocate, Planned Parenthood's top priority is ensuring that all individuals have access to the health care and information they need, including the full range of sexual and reproductive health services. Planned Parenthood believes all people should have access to quality, affordable health care—regardless of who you are, where you live, your income or if you have health insurance.

Planned Parenthood understands how important it is for all people to have access to high-quality, nonjudgmental health care that affirms their identity, their family, and their sexuality — as well as the ability and resources to make their own health care decisions with dignity. Everyone has the right to plan their families, live in safe and healthy environments and to control their bodies, their gender and their sexuality. Also, as a member of CT Equality, a statewide LGBTQ+ advocacy coalition, we support H.B. 6321 because it is essential that parentage law protect the rich diversity of families in Connecticut and ensures that all parents can protect and care for their children, and that all children born in our state have an equal, clear path to securing a legal tie to their parents.

Right now, Connecticut parentage law is outdated and unconstitutional, and it leaves some children without access to the protections of legal parentage. It does not protect LGBTQ+ couples raising children and leaves the relationship between the non-biological parent and child vulnerable. Connecticut is the only New England state without paths to parentage for non-biological parents. Current parentage law does not provide LGBTQ parents access to parentage through an Acknowledgment of Parentage, which is the simple administrative route that establishes parentage at the time of birth. These gaps in current law leave children and families vulnerable.

Another gap in our state parentage law is that it does not protect all children born through assisted reproduction by securing the relationship between intended parents and their children. Currently our law lacks clear standards to protect all involved in the surrogacy process, including both the intended parents and the person acting as the surrogate. Regardless of how you create your families, your family should be protected and recognized under the law. H.B. 6321 fills gaps in existing protections and ensures access to legal parentage for all children, including those with unmarried, same-sex, or non-biological parents.

The Connecticut Parentage Act is a straightforward update to our laws that will provide fairness for all families and protect Connecticut children. Raised H.B. 6321 will update the state's parentage laws to ensure that all children in Connecticut have equal access to the security of a legal relationship to their parents, regardless of the circumstances of their birth or their parents' sexual orientation, gender, or marital status. This bill will comprehensively update Connecticut law to ensure our state parentage laws remain constitutional, best practice, and protective of all of children. Planned Parenthood strongly supports H.B. 6321 and we urge the committee to vote favorably as we continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure our patients and our communities have what they need to live healthy, safer and self-determined lives. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.